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RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 9611  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 2758  
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PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - SIX-PARTY FOREIGN  
MINISTERIAL ON NORTH KOREA AND ASEAN

11. LEAD STORIES: Front-page stories on Friday morning included the arrest of a defense "insider" on suspicion of tax evasion.

12. "U.S. Should Consider Canceling Delisting" The conservative Sankei editorialized (7/25): "What is common both on the nuclear and abduction fronts is that North Korea is buying time to strike a better deal. Concerns are mounting within the U.S. Congress. Close cooperation between the U.S. and Japan is indispensable to ensure progress on both matters. The U.S., in particular, is strongly called upon to take a firm stand, including suspending or canceling delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism."

13. "No Progress on Nuclear Verification, Abductions" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri argued in an editorial (7/25): "The six-party talks are paying a high price for the hurried compromise by the Bush administration to put off the establishment of a nuclear verification mechanism.... Such a U.S. concession will prove to be meaningless if a stringent verification protocol is not agreed upon. The U.S., Japan, China, Russia, and South Korea should coordinate in order to press North Korea to swiftly accept verification work. An easy compromise must not be allowed."

14. "How to Block North Korea's Domination of Six-Party Talks" The liberal Mainichi asserted in an editorial (7/25): "It cannot be denied that North Korea set the pace in the informal six-party foreign ministerial. One could even say that it was a session for the foreign ministers to acknowledge the delisting of North Korea

as a fait accompli. The U.S. has hinted that it could forgo delisting depending on North Korea's actions. However, Washington's bottom line is that the ongoing moves toward denuclearization, which is currently in the second phase, should not be reversed.... Japan needs to prepare for what happens after delisting takes place."

15. "ARF Transforming into Entity That Can Take Action" The business-oriented Nikkei's correspondent reported from Singapore on the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) (7/25): "...An ARF ministerial ended with the adoption of a declaration calling for the enhancement of the group's functions. Up to now, the ARF had just been a venue for dialogue meant for confidence building. However, it is trying to reorganizing itself into an institution capable of taking action."

16. "U.S. Attaching Importance to Southeast Asia" The moderate Yomiuri reported from Singapore (7/25): "Washington's pro-engagement posture toward ASEAN was more pronounced than ever during this year's ARF ministerial. China's presence in Southeast Asia has been growing in the face of America's preoccupation with Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. hoped to use the multinational forum to maintain its influence in the region."

ZUMWALT